Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of viewing information, the method comprising,

employing one or more data objects contained within a data source,

employing a spatial paradigm for defining hierarchical relationships between said data objects,

defining ~~one or more~~ a plurality of hierarchical plates,

defining an appearance for each of said hierarchical plates, said appearance containing a graphical representation of one or more of said data objects, and

locating in a virtual space each of said ~~one or more~~ hierarchical plates, based at least in part on said spatial paradigm said virtual space including a first dimension, a second dimension, and a third dimension, said first dimension corresponding to a plurality of planes within said virtual space at which one of said hierarchical plates can be located and said second and said third dimensions corresponding to a position of said one of said hierarchical plates within a plane, said hierarchical plates being located along said first dimension according to said hierarchical relationship.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of defining an appearance further comprises, defining in a portion of said appearance of a first of said one or more hierarchical plates an appearance of data objects associated with a second hierarchical plate at a size relatively smaller than data objects contained in said first hierarchical plate.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising employing raster graphics in defining said graphical representation.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising employing vector graphics in defining said graphical representation.

5. (currently amended) A method of viewing information, the method comprising,

employing ~~one or more~~ a plurality of hierarchical plates, each one of said hierarchical plates having an appearance, said appearance containing a graphical representation of one or more data objects associated with said one of said hierarchical plates,

employing a hierarchical relationship in a virtual display space between said one or more hierarchical plates, said virtual space including a first dimension, a second dimension, and a third dimension, said first dimension corresponding to a plurality of planes within said virtual space at which one of said hierarchical plates can be located and said second and said third dimensions corresponding to a position of said one of said hierarchical plates within a plane, said hierarchical plates being located along said first dimension according to said hierarchical relationship.

displaying on a client, from an adjustable viewing perspective of a user, said appearance of a first of ~~one or more~~ said hierarchical plates, said appearance corresponding to a current virtual location of said user, and

enabling said user to navigate said ~~one or more~~ hierarchical plates in a substantially unrestricted fashion.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said step of displaying on a client further comprises displaying in a portion of said appearance of said first hierarchical plate an

appearance of data objects associated with a second hierarchical plate, located virtually behind said first hierarchical plate in said virtual display space.

7. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein said step of displaying in a portion of said appearance of said first hierarchical plate further comprises displaying said appearance of data objects associated with a second hierarchical plate at a size relatively smaller than said data objects associated with said first hierarchical plate.

8. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, defining virtual distances from each of said hierarchical plates to said user, as said virtual distance from said first one of said hierarchical plates to said user decreases, displaying a reduced number of said one or more of said data objects associated with said first one of said hierarchical plates, and displaying more detail with respect to said reduced number, and as said virtual distance from said first one of said hierarchical plates to said user increases, displaying an increased number of said one or more of said data objects associated with said first one of said plates, and displaying less detail with respect to said increased number.

9. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, defining said first hierarchical plate to be translucent, and enabling said user to view through said first hierarchical plate one or more data objects on a second one of said hierarchical plates located at a greater virtual distance from said user than said first hierarchical plate.

10. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, defining said first hierarchical plate to be opaque, and inhibiting said user from viewing through said first hierarchical plate said one or more data objects associated with a second one of said hierarchical plates located at a greater virtual distance from said user than said first hierarchical plate.

11. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, defining a closest one of said one or more hierarchical plates as having a smallest one of said virtual distances, and employing said closest one of said hierarchical plates as said first one of said hierarchical plates.

12. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, organizing said one or more data objects on one of said one or more hierarchical plates to be hierarchically equivalent.

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 5 further comprising, determining said one or more of said data objects, at least in part, in dependence on ~~said~~ a translational position of ~~said~~ a user.

16. (original) A method according to claim 8 further comprising, enabling said user to vary said virtual distances with respect to each of said plates.

17. (original) A method according to claim 16 further comprising, defining a threshold smallest virtual distance at which said closest one of said hierarchical plates is determined to be located virtually behind said user, in response to said user navigating to said threshold smallest virtual distance, ceasing to display said closest one of said hierarchical plates, and defining a plate having a next smallest virtual distance to be said closest one of said hierarchical plates.

18. (original) A method according to claim 5 further comprising, providing a visual indication to said user as to which of said hierarchical plates is being displayed.

19. (original) A method according to claim 18 wherein the step of providing further comprises, employing a breadcrumb trail.

20. (original) A method according to claim 19 further comprising, enabling said user to select a representation of one of said hierarchical plates displayed in said visual indication, thereby changing said appearance to said selected one of said hierarchical plates.

21. (currently amended) A system for viewing information, the system comprising,

a computing device adapted to employ one or more data objects contained within a data source and a spatial paradigm for defining hierarchical relationships between said data objects, to define ~~one or more~~ a plurality of hierarchical plates, and an appearance for each of said hierarchical plates, said appearance containing a graphical representation of one or more of said data objects, and to locate in a virtual space each of said ~~one or more~~ hierarchical plates, based at least in part on said spatial paradigm, said virtual space including a first dimension, a second dimension, and a third dimension, said first dimension corresponding to a plurality of planes within said virtual space at which one of said hierarchical plates can be located and said second and said third dimensions corresponding to a position of said one of said hierarchical plates within a plane, said hierarchical plates being located along said first dimension according to said hierarchical relationship.

22. (original) The system of claim 21 further adapted to define in a portion of said appearance of a first of said one or more hierarchical plates an appearance of data objects

associated with a second hierarchical plate at a size relatively smaller than data objects contained in said first hierarchical plate.

Claims 23 - 40 (cancelled)